

BLACK PREACHING AND HEALTH EDUCATION

A Professional Project

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Doctor of Ministry

by

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ABSTRACT

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The African-American preacher has historically been the focal facilitator for change and mobilization in the African-American community during the past several hundred years in the United States. In practically every significant movement or cause of black Americans, one will undoubtedly discover at the center a black preacher. The premise of this project is based on phenomena that the African-American preacher can serve an instrumental role in educating and motivating African-Americans to embrace a healthier lifestyle. Chapter 1 expands this theme and gives an overview of reasons why such a challenge is both relevant and necessary.

Chapter 2 is dedicated to establishing the historical role, significance, and traditional content of the African-American preacher. After giving a summary of the black preacher's traditional content, it is proposed that preaching to elevate the physical being is largely missing from the urban black pulpit. Therefore, Chapter 3 expands on this by sharing a biblical perspective on the issues of healthful living. Texts are extracted from both the New and Old Testaments to establish the premise that God is indeed concerned about our health.

To provide data concerning the health status of urban

African-Americans, Chapter 4 examines several major health problems that are directly related to lifestyle. Health problems investigated are hypertension, substance abuse, cancer, diabetes, and AIDS.

Chapter 5 is an examination of a successful religious model that integrates healthy lifestyles into everyday lives. The denomination chosen is the Seventh-day Adventists who encompass wholistic living by incorporating eight fundamental health principles. In addition to providing a religious model, Chapter 6 includes practical models of sermons to be used as resources to preachers who are inspired to include health promotional concepts in their sermon repertoires. A final challenge and summary is issued in the concluding chapter.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

This writer has often reflected on the words of Jesus found in the Gospel of John which say, "I am come that ye might have life and have it more abundantly" (John 10:10 KJV), and has concluded that Jesus was talking about more than just a promise of eternal life for the redeemed. For certain this is the master's official position on his concern for the totality of human life which includes the body (physical), mind (mental) as well as the soul (spiritual).

Because of my earnest quest to pattern my life and ministry after Jesus Christ, I have on occasion compared my life and ministry with His life and ministry that is presented in the Scriptures. The results of this tedious and painful process revealed the many areas of my life and ministry that I needed to strengthen. One of the areas of neglect in my ministry dealt with the issues of health and physical accountability coupled with the importance that the Bible places upon these subjects for all of the ones who wear the name of Christ. Upon further examination of this subject of health, I surprisingly discovered that this is an area that was not only overlooked by the writer, but also by the majority of African-American churches as well.

As an African-American pastor who is serving a church in the inner city of Compton, California, I have been

exposed to the varying degrees of social, religious, and health crises that are in the lives of the congregants and community on an ongoing basis. Being called upon to assist in enabling these persons to find wholeness in a consistent and committed Christian lifestyle, I have discovered that the body and soul are inextricably bound to each other. Yet, the general emphasis of the traditional black pulpit has been relatively silent on the issue of health education.

Therefore, because of the historical strength of the black pulpit, coupled with the declining health of African-Americans, I would like to set forth a stirring challenge to the black clergy to include health educational concepts in their yearly diet of sermons for the sole purpose of uplifting, teaching, and motivating African-Americans to live more healthily.

It is not only out of a practical concern that a challenge is issued to the African-American pulpit, but also because of the undeniable Biblical mandate that confronts every true student of the Word. Without question there is a theme throughout the Scriptures that places a strong emphasis on a healthy lifestyle. The goal, then, is to encourage and enlighten those of us who are African-American clergy to issue a cry that will help people of our communities and congregations prevent sicknesses, diseases, and deaths, that result from ignorance of healthful practices and lifestyles.

This project is indeed important to the total life of the African-American church because healthier bodies translate into clearer minds. Clear minds translate into more stable individuals which would in turn strengthen our black families. In truth, many of the diseases and illnesses that are affecting African-Americans can be directly related to diet, attitude, and environment.

Scope and Limitations

Because of the broadness of the subject area, the parameters of this project have been carefully defined. The intent of this project is as follows:

1. To examine the African-American preachers' historical and present role in America;
2. To give Biblical data that embraces wholistic living -- body, mind, and soul;
3. To give an overview of some of the major physical health problems in the urban context;
4. To give an overview of a religious body that incorporates health concepts in their lifestyles; and
5. To give practical sermon models to enhance and expand the clergy's sermon repertoire that include health education principles.

This project does not include any study on the style, delivery, or the image of African-American preachers. Only their role and content is examined. Also, this study does not intend to discuss issues of mental health or any

comprehensive medical cures of problems in the urban community, but will only overview several concerns of major importance. In the Appendix, there is included a culminating bibliographic essay describing major sources that were used for this project.

Procedures for Integration

Since nothing exists in a vacuum, the proposed conclusions of this project have various sources of origins. Primary was library research which included examining many of the published materials on the subjects of the black preacher and health history of African-Americans. Also used are the tools of field studies, informal surveys, and numerous interviews of health professionals, preachers, congregants, and community. All of these methods were useful in determining the validity of the thesis.

Definitions of Major Terms

To aid in the reading of this project, the following are this writer's definitions of the major terms that will be used throughout this paper.

Biblical Mandate. A series of scriptural texts that conclude in a definite command or call to obedience of a particular subject.

Black Preaching. Sermons or messages that are designed for and delivered by African-Americans. The content and themes of these sermons are usually based from Biblical accounts to address particular concerns and needs of the African-American congregants and citizens.

Health Education. Any positive data, information, or instructions in the area of personal health management that enlighten and challenge one to pursue a healthier lifestyle.

Lifestyle. A person's or group's habits, behavior and manner in everyday living.

Urban. Used to uniquely describe the living context of the people who are of African-American ancestry in the inner-cities of the United States.

CHAPTER 2

The Historical Significance and Content of Black Preaching

The Historical Profile of the Black Preacher

To be sure, volumes have been written about this powerful and enigmatic leader called the black preacher. Many books, articles, and essays have expounded on the importance and role of the ones who W. E. B. DuBois once called "the most unique personality developed by the Negro on American soil."¹ The basic purpose of this section is to examine the following questions. Who is the black preacher? Where did he come from? What is the traditional content of his messages?

Henry Mitchell accurately states that "the preaching tradition of the Black ancestors did not spring into existence suddenly ... but was developed during a long and often quite disconnected series of contacts between the Christian gospel, variously interpreted, and African men and women caught up in the Black experience of slavery and oppression."² The black preacher and thus black preaching evolved out of a serious need of a people to be liberated from an abusive and oppressive institution called slavery, and its aftermath. Given the deep religious convictions of the displaced African, his whole body, mind and soul yearned to be free. Though restricted by physical chains the slave refused to be bound mentally or spiritually.

As an opiate, the slave masters wickedly introduced a tainted form of Christianity to the slave to make him more responsive to this evil institution and make them better workers and citizens. Instead, the miraculous result was the embodiment of a gospel by the slaves that served as one of the essential keys for survival during these shameful times. God enabled the black preacher to interpret the true meaning of the gospels to his people in a way, language, and style that would cause the slaves to experience true liberation for the first time. H. Beecher Hicks asserts:

The black preacher was seen by slave masters as a tool to be used to control the masses of slaves, as a parasite gouging life from his people for his own gain, an opium for oppressive purposes, and as an ignorant buffoon felt to be incapable of delivering the gospel with any sense of authenticity While the master used him as a tool, he took and used it to plow up fertile spiritual ground. What seemed to the master an amusing but inept homily was laced with lessons only the oppressed could comprehend. That opium the slave master would have used as a drug, the slave preacher converted to the sweet balm that made life bearable.³

Thus, the black preacher found his beginning in the setting of slavery which had stripped the people of their heritage, culture, esteem and families.

From such a humble beginning the black preacher and in particular black preaching has sustained a prominent role in the life of the black community for over one hundred and seventy-five years. C. Eric Lincoln writes:

The Great Awakening ushered in the age of the informal preacher in America . . . and in the informal, folk-oriented atmosphere of the

awakening, even a black preacher could exhort and be heard and appreciated.⁴

This period produced black pulpit giants such as the Reverend Harry Hoosier, better known as Black Harry, Richard Allen, the father of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, and Lemuel Haynes, a congregational preacher who served predominantly white parishes.

Lincoln continues

By the end of the Civil War the role of the black preacher included the offices of education, liberator, political leader, and sometimes that of a physician (healer) as well as that of advocate and spiritual leader. Unlike the white preacher, his status did not depend upon formal education or training but upon his ability to preach the word and to represent his followers before God and before the hostile white world which suffered their earthly existence.⁵

Thus, this office of the black preacher became the highest and most respected profession to which blacks could aspire.

The black preacher of the slave era received his call by God through some religious experience which indicated that God had chosen him as a spiritual leader. E. Franklin Frazier asserts that there were at least three qualifications that would confirm or validate one's call. The first qualification was that he must have knowledge of the Bible in order to convey at least the "important" parts of Scripture. Secondly, the black preacher must be able to speak or communicate this special knowledge to the slaves or, more commonly, to be able to preach. Thirdly, the

preacher had to have the ability to sing, for preaching consisted of singing sacred songs which have come to be known as spirituals.⁶

This natural, God-given talent enabled the preacher to voice the woes and sorrows of the other slaves. He spoke directly to their quest for liberation and freedom. They could connect to his words. His telepathic way of describing how they felt was grounded in mutual suffering and pain, and bound by the heavy chains and shackles of being perceived and treated as less than human.

John W. Blassingame correctly commented that "whatever the content of the sermons, the slaves preferred a black preacher."⁷ The slaves could trust the preacher and relate to the language and symbol of freedom that he espoused. Although the preacher had to be careful not to anger the slave master, preaching enabled him to paint a vivid picture of heaven and hell and the prevailing oppressive social structure with a few strokes of the imagination. The slave listener could read between the lines and understand that there was something liberating about the message and the messenger.

The Present Significance of the Black Preacher

Since slavery until the present, the black preacher has undoubtedly enjoyed being the most celebrated figure in the black community since the arrival of its people on these shores of North America. His list of responsibilities loom

large and long from storyteller to heart-member. Charles Hamilton writes:

The black preacher has been called upon by politicians, parishioners, peacemakers and all allies. He has a perpetual constituency, the congregation, which he sees assembled for at least one to two hours each week . . . he is a kind of celebrity⁸

The amazing fact of the black preacher's leadership role in this writer's opinion is the broad area in which the preacher is allowed to exercise his gifts. Far from being relegated to the pulpit only, the current black preacher demonstrates leadership in all aspects of the black community and the congregants' lives. John H. Adams, Jr. confirms this fact by writing:

The preacher in the black experience is a combination of the African medicine man, rain-maker, and witch doctor all combined into one person. . . . Because of the uniqueness of the black preacher, he/she is considered to be an authority on all matters: economics, politics, and spirituality.⁹

Although I feel that this idea of the preacher being a know-it-all is subsiding, it is none-the-less expected that the black preacher will be well-informed on a variety of different subjects and occupations. To sum up the profile of leadership of this black professional, I believe Henry Mitchell is accurate when he states:

By tradition, the black preacher has always enjoyed the status of being the natural leader of the black community. His leadership role has at times assumed a variety of forms with concomitant responsibilities: pastor or spiritual leader, political leader, social leader, and very often the leading proponent and exemplar of education.¹⁰

Without question the black preacher has definitely been the chief influential figure of the black community and continues to be the instrumental force for change and progress. Although his/her role has expanded somewhat since slavery, the African-American preacher's role as leader of the urban community is until this day an established reality.

The Traditional Content of the Black Preacher

In examining this subject of the traditional content of the black preacher, one must first understand that the black preacher is the product of: (1) his African-religious tribal heritage; and (2) a leadership role born out of a cultural disorientation and disorganization within the slave community.¹¹ With this background in mind, this writer's supposition is that the black preacher in America was called into being by God for a specific purpose: to restore the message of life and wholeness to the black community in specific, and to all humankind, in general. As stated earlier, the message of Jesus Christ is designed for the whole person: social, mental, physical and spiritual. Yet, I have found that the traditional content of the majority of African-American pulpits has only focused on three of these four elements that formulate a wholistic Christian lifestyle.

Preaching - To Elevate the Soul

One of the traditions of content of black preaching is

its theology designed to elevate the soul. This is a belief that is based in the awareness of the justice, providence, and omnipresence of a God who is both immanent and transcendent. It is rooted in the hope and faith that someday things are going to get better. It is both liberating and survivalistic in its content because at the very core of this aspect of preaching is the essential faith that "God will make a way somehow." Henry Mitchell affirms this by quoting one African-American parishioner who states:

I never get too worried, because I know that God works in everything for good. Life looks pretty bad at times, but I have learned that when one door is slammed shut, God reserves the right to open a larger one for me. My God set a limit on the things you can do to believers and always leaves some way for them to keep going I know that God works in everything for good, and reserves the right to squeeze a final blessing out of anything.¹²

This type of preaching elevates the soul or causes one to rise above situations and circumstances of difficulty to give hope, assurance, and faith in God who has everything in his hands.

Preaching - To Elevate the Mind

Another form of preaching that is done within the context of traditional African-American worship is that which elevates or challenges the mind or thought process. Because of the pervasiveness of the prejudice, racism, sexism, and classism in America, a natural biblical message

came forth to combat such harmful and diabolical themes. Thus, the African-American preacher was again divinely inspired to address the minds of his hearers and to remind them that all are created equal and that each person is created as a special and unique entity.

James Cones points out:

The essence of ante-bellum black religion was the emphasis on the 'somebodiness' of black slaves. The content of the black preachers message stressed the essential worth of their person Because religion defined the 'somebodiness' of their being, black slaves could retain a sense of the dignity of their person even though they were treated as things.¹³

Consequently, much of the preaching that African-American preachers are called to do is to raise the self-esteem and consciousness levels of their congregants to help them realize their worth and uniqueness in the eyes of God and to the world at large. Mitchell states:

The African emphasis on personal uniqueness survived in faith and the common culture of Black America, in the churches and in the wider community. Patterns of the affirmation of uniqueness persist in profusion. A brother or sister in church sings, 'This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine.' In the wider community they sing, 'It's your thing.' Either place, as a soloist audaciously improvises on the theme, the supporting audience cries, 'Sing your song,' and everybody is fulfilled vicariously by the one person's breakthrough Preachers number among the artists with their colorful oratory, joining the rest of Black culture in affirming uniqueness.¹⁴

On many occasions, this writer has been used to elevate the minds of congregants by the use of this form of black

preaching.

Preaching - To Elevate the Spiritual Dimension

Another facet of black preaching deals with the spiritual life or more commonly the issues of the Christian life. This entails the teaching of doctrines of faith and practice that are firmly rooted in the Holy scriptures. Themes such as Heaven, God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, Salvation, Forgiveness, Grace, the Church, the Second Coming and others are all themes that pertain to a solid understanding of what the Christian faith is all about.

This type of black preaching is primarily informational or cognitive in its aim. For unless a person is convinced and convicted of the basic truths and values of the Christian faith, his/her religion is in vain.

This type of black preaching is almost exclusively based solely in the Bible. As James Cones states:

By taking seriously the witness of scripture, we are prevented from making the gospel into private moments of religious ecstasy or into the religious sanctification of the structures of society. The Bible can serve as a guide for checking contemporary interpretation of God's revelation, making certain that our interpretation is consistent with the biblical witness.¹⁵

This content of preaching is entrenched in the unwavering truth of God's Word which must be the primary motive for true and consistent Christian belief.

What is Missing?

This chapter has briefly addressed the traditional types or content of black preaching which have included preaching to elevate the soul, which encompasses our emotional being. It has also examined the content of preaching to the mind, which includes our mental beings. The discussion then unearthed the concepts and content of preaching to elevate spiritual selves which encompassed the truth of the Word of God in Christian belief.

The area that is missing from the traditional diet served from the African-American pulpit is the content of preaching to elevate the physical being -- or health issues found in the Bible that directly relate to the other three areas of wholistic living. This writer has found African-American preachers to be extremely silent on the issues of health education. Therefore, the next chapter is dedicated to establishing what I believe to be a biblical mandate to live healthily.

Chapter 2

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CHAPTER 3

The Biblical Mandate to Live Healthily

At the time of creation God produced the ultimate in his creativity -- a human being. Then, when he was finished, he made an assessment and evaluation of all of His creative works and came to the conclusion that "it was very good."¹

When we consider our heritage as sons and daughters of God, there is nothing of which we need to be ashamed. Gary Swanson says, "We need not agree with Mark Twain that man is the only animal that blushes or needs to. . .or of William Harvey, the discoverer of the circulation of blood, when he called man a great, mischievous baboon."²

The Bible clearly states that God made man in His own image.³ We were made to look, think, and act in ways that reflect God. He intended that the longer man lived, the more fully he would reflect the glory of his Creator.

But then sin distorted this reflection. When Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden, it set forth into motion the natural consequences of sin - which includes suffering, sickness, and death. Ever since God's perfect reflection in man's life began to dissolve, the human body has been cursed with illness, disease, deformity, weakness, and pain.

When Jesus came to this earth, one of his primary objectives was to initiate and implement a total and

complete restoration of man to his original condition before sin. By giving the fallen race a second chance, he rescued a lost world from its hideous condition. Thus, miraculously, yet imperfectly, the saved community could once again reflect God's image. As part of this process, it is our responsibility and challenge to do everything in our power to live out the principles of health that God has designed for us. It must be noted that health is more than the absence of pain, discomfort and disease. The World Health Organization describes health as follows: "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity."

Enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being, without distinction of race, religion, political belief, economic or social condition.⁴ E. Gartley Jaco summarizes the functional definition of health, seeing it as, "The state of optimum capacity of an individual for the effective performance of the roles and tasks for which he has been socialized."⁵ Together these definitions synthesize into a paradigm wherein body, mind, and soul are held in vital equilibrium and tension. Health, therefore, is the functional integration of these constituent elements.

The Bible and Health

God takes account of all that pertains to creation as it relates to both their spiritual and mental lives. When

the human family was created, they were given great moral principles by which their lives should be governed. These principles are expressed in the laws of the Ten Commandments. The Creator also took into account the physical beings giving special instructions throughout the Bible where we find recorded injunctions and statements that give us insights and clues into the issue of health and its importance.

Upon examining the biblical texts that explicitly declare that one's body or one's health is extremely significant, this writer discovered some solid evidence that supports the notion of health management. Below are some primary examples (from the New King James Version):

1 Cor. 6:19,20 - Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? for you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit which are God's.

Rom. 12:1 - I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

1 Cor. 3:17 - If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.

Rom. 6:13 - And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

1 Thess. 5:23 - Now may the God of peace sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

3 John 1:2 - Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers.

Matt. 4:23 - Now Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of diseases among the people.

1 Cor. 9:27 - But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

From these New Testament texts one sees the close relationship which exists between the physical and the spiritual nature of man. The question of physical health cannot be dismissed as an unimportant issue. It must be recognized that every physical habit has an influence for good or for evil upon the spiritual faculties.⁶ Ellen White, one of the leading health reformers of the nineteenth century, sums up this relationship between the spiritual and physical as follows:

Let none who profess godliness regard with indifference the health of the body, and flatter themselves that intemperance is no sin, and will not affect their spirituality. A close sympathy exists between the physical and the moral nature. The standard of virtue is elevated or degraded by physical habits Any habit which does not promote healthful action in the human system degrades the higher and nobler faculties. Wrong habits in eating and drinking lead to errors in thought and actions.⁷

Thus, it is in the Bible where one finds the foundation principles of good health. One of the most important texts is brought in view in Prov. 4:20-22:

My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear into my sayings. Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart. For they

are life into those that find them, and health to all their flesh.

Living healthily is not something that is a new fad of the nineties but has been God's design since the beginning of time.

God, Moses, and Health

History shows that God gave His ancient people, through his servant Moses, laws of health, and modern medicine in the past century has begun to discover the validity of these claims. Of these laws of health that were given, were included:

1. Laws respecting diet. Leviticus 11:46,47 says, "This is the law To make a difference between the clean and the unclean, and between the beast that may be eaten and the beast that may not be eaten."

2. Laws respecting labor and rest. Exodus 20:9,10 says, "Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work."

3. Laws of hygiene. Leviticus 14:18 states, " He that is to be cleansed shall wash his clothes, and shave off all his hair, and wash himself in water, that he may be clean."

4) Laws respecting morality. Exodus 20:14 says, "Thou shalt not commit adultery."

These instructions which Moses gave the ancient Israelites were unusual from a medical viewpoint for those

days. Rudolf Virchow, who has been known as the father of modern pathology, said that Moses was the greatest hygienist the world has seen.⁸

O. S. Parett writes:

Depending upon revealed knowledge, and possessing no scientific equipment, Moses taught in its essentials nearly every principle of hygiene now practiced. Among them we find disease prevention, disinfection by fire and water, epidemic control by reporting and isolation of communicable diseases or their carriers, followed by thorough disinfection of all possible contaminated articles. Personal cleanliness was enjoined, and sewage disposal was enforced, so that the Jewish camp was as clean as a modern city. Though exercise was provided, overwork was guarded against by frequent enforced periods of rest and relaxation.⁹

C. D. Willis also declared that "the Hebrews were the cleanest people in ancient times, and even today their ancient standards cannot be improved upon."¹⁰

Another forerunner of scientific medicine is found in Lev. 17:11 which says that "the life of the flesh is in the blood." This fact took medical science more than two thousand years to validate. Only a little more than three hundred years ago did William Harvey, a British physician, discover the circulation of the blood.¹¹ Yet, this discovery was suggested in the writings of Leviticus millennia before.

The health laws as written down by Moses forbade the use of certain animals for food, especially the flesh of swine.¹² Many have ventured to give reasons for such

restrictions, such as, lack of proper refrigeration and because of the absence of advanced chemical preservatives in those times. While this reason is probably significant, in 1847 Joseph Leidy discovered the parasitic worm *Trichenella Spiralis* in pork, which is linked to several causes of sicknesses and diseases. While we are not told the conclusive reason why the use of swines' flesh as food was forbidden in the law of Moses, certainly modern science has at least found one good reason to be wary of it. Even the United States Department of Agriculture has issued many pamphlets, articles and bulletins on the damages of trichinosis that are well worth reading.

The Mosaic laws of health also forbade the use of blood as food:

Whatever man . . . that eateth any manner of blood; I will set my face against that soul that eateth blood, and will cut him off from among his people. For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the alter to make an atonement for the soul. (Lev. 17:10, 11)

Today we know that this proscription against the use of blood as food has a sound physiological basis. The blood constantly carries off impurities from the muscle tissues and, since disease in the animal kingdom is increasing at an alarming rate, the blood is filled with germs and impurities.¹³ You may ask the question, Where did Moses gather such advanced medical data that took men thousands of years to discover? I submit that he received this

information from the Creator of all things, the God of Israel, who created human life in the beginning and knew all about body chemistry.

Animal fat was also forbidden as food in these laws.¹⁴ This also has a sound physiological basis with which the current medical findings are in complete concurrence. Animal fat as food, especially in large quantities, is considered detrimental to the human organism.¹⁵ It is also commonly believed that the use of animal fat in the diet is a cause of hardening of the arteries and other afflictions, and is contributory to various forms of heart disease.

Jesus and Health

From the outset of his ministry Jesus showed Himself to be the Great Physician. The first chapter of Mark's Gospel records this in the number of healings, miracles that are there reported.¹⁶ Matthew summarizes the mercies of those early days by saying, "Jesus went about all Galilee...healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people. And his fame went throughout all Syria" (Matt. 4:23,24). The same evangelist later uses similar words to tell of the Master's continuing medical ministry among his suffering compatriots and reports that "when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them" (Chaps. 9:35,36). This led Him to ordain twelve disciples, giving them also "power...to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease," even as He himself did

(Chap. 10:1).

Bernard E. Seton adds:

as the apostles continued the merciful work their Lord had begun they too cared for the health of many of the invalids who heard the gospel from their lips. In succeeding centuries it has been Christian initiative that has founded hospitals, orphanages, retirement homes, and has shown loving practical concern for millions who had been hitherto neglected.¹⁷

Today, the Master's commission still stands, though its practitioners must adapt to rapidly changing conditions in all corners of the earth, making different types of contributions as basic medical needs are increasingly met by governmental and private agencies.

Jesus also wants us to consider our own health needs, for it would be tragic if we spent time and energy sharing the gospel of spiritual and physical health with others only to find ourselves unsaved. In expectation of His return He tells us to take care because we might be caught by the same traps that have ensnared others -- dissatisfaction, drunkenness, and everyday anxieties.¹⁸

We may even try to deny the very possibility of our being caught in such vices, but the truth is that the dangers are all too real, and our Lord Jesus sees the necessary need of warning us about it. Faithfulness to Christian health principles will help to protect us from the snares that could destroy us.

Since the establishment of the New Testament Church, there have been a few Christian denominations and sects that have been careful in matters of health and recognize the definite correlation between body and mind. Among these health conscious groups are the Amish, the Mennonites, and the Quakers. These religious bodies have taught temperance and simplicity in food, drink, and in life.¹⁹

Also, H. M. S. Richards states that the principles of the laws that were established in Moses' time in Leviticus 13 were used as sanitary legislation to save millions of lives during the middle ages of leprosy, the Black Death, and other fatal diseases.²⁰

Summary

Throughout Scripture health is an important teaching. Although the King James Version of the Old Testament uses the word health only 15 times, careful study shows how important our physical condition is to God. The word shalom, for example, appears about 250 times. It is usually translated "peace," but it has a much fuller meaning that would usually include a wish for good health as well as a sense of well-being.²¹

D. A. Delafield wrote:

The airplane flies because it is obedient to the laws of aerodynamics and certain laws of motion. What is true in the inanimate world is likewise true in the biological world. Divine laws function smoothly at the level of obedience. In the physical being of man divine laws are written on every tissue and fiber of the body and the brain. Christians should acquaint themselves with

these laws, which are just as sacred as the Ten Commandments. These laws were made to be obeyed.²²

There is much more concerning health that is found in the Scriptures, but the above illustrations have uncovered enough Biblical evidence to conclude that God does care about our total beings. We have come to a time when not only ministers, rabbis, priests, and others who labor in spiritual lines, but also scientists, physicians and medical technicians recognize more and more that man is one unit: body, soul and spirit. The attitude of Scripture to health is an essential element of Christian faith. God has left guidelines for the care of our wonderfully created bodies. He also knows that our ultimate joy depends upon our following His guidelines for the benefit of our churches and communities. Let us recapture the essence of God's message of health.

Chapter 3

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CHAPTER 4

Some Major Health Problems in the Urban Context

Despite the tremendous strides in improving the health and longevity of Americans, statistical trends do not reflect significant improvements in the incidence of death and illness among African Americans. The life expectancy at birth for African Americans is about 5.6 years shorter than whites. Cancer, heart disease, violence, drug abuse, infant mortality and AIDS are the leading causes of disability and death among Black families in the United States.¹

In this chapter, it is the writer's goal to enumerate major issues of health that are plaguing the urban community and to include the major lifestyle and risk factors that are associated with each illness. The inclusion of this section is vitally important because unless the church and community become aware of the actual state of health of black America, all attempts to promote significant alternatives will be in vain. It is my personal belief that the greatest need of the black church community is to be given sound, simple, and practical information that will assist in helping them see the importance of health.

According to the 1990 Urban League report on The State of Black America, "Black Americans experience complex health disadvantages, which are exacerbated by a combination of poverty, racial bias, ignorance, and lack of access to quality health care."² Louis Sullivan, Secretary of Health

and Human Services adds, "The top ten causes of premature death in our nation [among Black Americans] are significantly influenced by personal behavior and lifestyle choices."³ Therefore, frank discussion of health conditions is vitally important.

Before giving an overview of some major health concerns of African-Americans, the following are some highlights of mortality and morbidity findings according to the Report of the Secretary's Task Force on Black and Minority Health:

- Of two million deaths per year, roughly twelve percent are Black.

- There is a significant disparity between the death rates of Blacks and Whites.

- Excess Black death between the ages of 45-69 were due mainly to cancer, cirrhosis, heart disease, stroke, and diabetes.

- For Blacks, heart disease, stroke, and cancer assume greater importance with advanced age.

- Hypertension is the leading cause of kidney failure and hypertension related end stage renal disease in Blacks and is a major concomitant of heart disease and strokes.
⁴

These statistical analyses concluded with the statement, "Many of the causes of excess deaths in Blacks are amenable to reduction through preventive and public health activities."⁵

It must be noted that biological differences appear to explain very little of the difference in health status

between blacks and whites. Instead, the major factors appear to be socioeconomic and physical environments, personal health habits, and lifestyles.

Expanding on the socioeconomic issue, the text book, A Common Destiny states:

Because of the relationship between poverty and health, and because poverty has been a persistent problem for Blacks in the United States, it is to be expected that blacks' greater poverty is responsible for much of the black white health disparity. . . . Poverty in childhood often means lack of proper nutrition, unsafe housing, poor access to health care or other resources needed for healthy growth and development."⁶

No doubt socioeconomic factors contribute heavily to the health plight of African-Americans. It is, therefore the African-American's preachers responsibility to inform and inspire the congregation and community to demand social justice in the areas of equal health education, equal health-care facilities, more qualified health-care professionals, and equal access to all-around quality health-care.

This section focuses on five of the major problems that contribute to the health predicament of urban America. Though this is far from being an exhaustive listing of the health problems, those chosen for examination include hypertension, cancer, substance abuse, diabetes, and AIDS.

Hypertension

In our society one of every four Americans suffers from

hypertension. Thirty-five million of these Americans are victims of serious forms of hypertension, and the remainder are pained by its mild or benign form. Altogether, nearly 60 million Americans are plagued by hypertension. It is the most chronic disease in the United States.⁷

Hypertension occurs more often among blacks in the United States than any other racial group and is "without question," according to George Berkley, "the number-one killer of American blacks."⁸ An African-American's chance of getting high-blood pressure is twice as great as a white person's.⁹ Hypertension is an increase in blood pressure, which is "the force extended by the blood against any unit area of the vessel wall."¹⁰ Blood pressure is commonly measured with a device containing a column of mercury which gives two important readings: systolic pressure (the heart's pumping stage) and diastolic pressure (the heart's resting stage).

Therefore, systolic pressure, the larger number, is a measurement of the force exerted by blood pushing against the walls of the arteries as the heart contracts and pumps blood. Diastolic pressure, the smaller figure, is the force against artery walls between beats.¹¹

Damaged or thickened arteries can increase the pressure of blood flowing through arteries. This can cause long-term elevation of the blood pressure that can lead to massive failures in the cardiovascular system -- heart attacks,

strokes, or kidney failure.¹²

Other factors contributing to elevated blood pressure are the increased thickness of the blood, arteriosclerosis (hardening of the arteries), or conditions such as shock, hemorrhage, or heart muscle damage.¹³ Though the cause of hypertension is not known, certain characteristics and patterns for known sufferers have been observed. The major trends include:

Age - It is known that hypertension has its onset between the ages of 25 and 55, with blood pressure increasing sharply after age 55.

Heredity - Heredity is a factor, and persons with a history of strokes, sudden death, and heart attacks among relatives are more vulnerable than persons whose families do not have such a history.

Gender - Sex is a factor, and women (especially those past menopause) have higher incidents of hypertension than men.

Climate - It has been observed that people in colder climates have higher blood pressure than people in tropical climates.

Race - This is also an established factor, as previously noted.¹⁴

Although there is no standard treatment for hypertension, there are several additional factors that can aid as contributory. These include:

1. Obesity;
2. Tension or stress;
3. Lack of exercise;
4. High salt intake;
5. Diets high in cholesterol, saturated, and polyunsaturated fats, and total calories;
6. Cigarette smoking;
7. Alcohol consumption;
8. Estrogen (menopause and in oral contraceptives); and
9. Personality type.¹⁵

As one can probably deduce, all of these factors can be directly controlled by the individual to help lower or eliminate hypertension altogether. With increased awareness of this major medical problem, and with some life-style changes, thousands of lives could be spared some of the primary effects of this unnecessary illness.

Cancer

According to the book by the National Research Council on blacks and American society entitled, A Common Destiny, "most Blacks have learned that hypertension is a problem, but most Blacks are believed to be unaware of the magnitude of the problem of cancer in the Black population."¹⁶ Yet Berkley reports that:

Blacks both male and female, were now leading their White counterparts in deaths from cancer of the lung, stomach, pancreas, and esophagus and were closing the gap when it came to cancers of the colon, rectum, bladder, ovary, and breast.¹⁷

It is also noted in A Common Destiny that "Blacks experience higher incidence, higher mortality, and poorer survival from cancer than Whites."¹⁸ Cancer indeed is a major health problem of African-Americans.

Simply defined, cancer occurs when the body loses its ability to control growth of its basic building block - the cell. Cells normally grow in a predictable, orderly fashion. However, under certain circumstances (such as cigarette smoking, radiation, chemicals, and aging) these cells undergo a change in their activity. This is called malignant degeneration. The cells take over the body, squeezing out the normal cells and sometimes making strong chemicals that change body functions.¹⁹

For many years the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has published the seven warning signs that may indicate the presence of cancer. The warning signs are:²⁰

1. Change in bowel or bladder habits;
2. A sore that does not heal;
3. Unusual bleeding or discharge;
4. Thickening or lump in the breast or elsewhere;
5. Indigestion or difficulty in swallowing;
6. Obvious change in wart or mole; and
7. Nagging cough or hoarseness.

Also, according to statistical information, below is a list of the ten leading cancers found in African-Americans:²¹

1. Lung;
2. Prostate;
3. Breast;
4. Colon;
5. Cervix Uteri;
6. Stomach;
7. Pancreas;
8. Esophagus;
9. Rectum; and
10. Bladder.

The leading causes of cancer among African-Americans are cigarette smoking, alcohol consumption, improper diet, and stress.²²

All four of these environmental factors can be controlled primarily through lifestyle changes. For instance, lung cancer shows by far the fastest mortality rates, and is caused generally by cigarette smoking. Cancer of the colon is linked to a diet high in fat and meat. Also, alcohol consumption is connected in the rapid rise in intraoral, esophageal, and liver cancer. Finally, negative, stress is documented as being the major culprit in the rapid spread of these cancers throughout the body.²³

Much can be said and done to help prevent or control this major health demon of African-Americans.

Substance Abuse

Studies show that illness and death related to

substance abuse in African-Americans, Hispanics, and Native Americans are greater than for their White counterparts.²⁴ These also indicate that the prevalence of reported substance use within the household population is generally higher in urban areas than in suburban and rural areas. Thus, to the extent that minorities are more likely to reside in inner city areas, they may be more predisposed to substance abuse and ultimately, the negative social and health consequences associated with substance abuse.

Substance abuse includes "the excessive use of tobacco, alcohol, or illicit drugs . . . the abuse of these substances is conceptually linked by the addiction, the compulsion, loss of control, and continued use despite adverse consequences."²⁵ This problem of substance abuse is probably the most serious problem facing black America. It is at epidemic proportions and is indiscriminate in whom it affects.

A Common Destiny states:

The magnitude of this problem in Blacks can be judged by deaths related to substance abuse. The mortality rate per 100,000 people for lung cancer is 95 for Black males and 70 for white males. These deaths are largely due to smoking. It is also estimated that cigarette smoking (see previous heading) is responsible for 30 percent of cancer deaths and that smoking-related deaths are particularly high among Blacks. The mortality from cirrhosis of the liver - which is closely related to alcohol consumption - is 29 for Blacks and 15 for Whites. Alcohol and drugs are also important factors in many cases of intentional and unintentional injury. It is this combination of circumstances that gives substance abuse its high priority among problems for Blacks.²⁶

Also on the list of those substances abused are those of illegal drugs such as crack, marijuana, PCP, heroin and "ice" (a smokeable form of methamphetamine). Problems related to these addictions include increased crime, wanton violence, mental disorders, family disruptions, and social problems in school and on the job.²⁷

It appears that genetic and social factors play an important role in the case of substance abuse. In general, the use of cigarettes, alcohol, and drugs is learned at an early age and continued during the adult years, when most of the effects and health and mortality begin to be seen. It has also been studied that factors of genetic influence, children being influenced by parent's behavior, and also the ease of access contribute to alcoholism.²⁸ Thus, it can be deduced that environment plays a major factor in all forms of substance abuse.

Diabetes Mellitus

Diabetes mellitus was the seventh leading cause of death in the United States in 1980 and is one of the six major contributors to the disparity in health status between minorities and non-minorities. The significance of diabetes as a health problem is increased by its association as a risk factor for other major diseases, including coronary heart disease, and peripheral vascular disease. Complications may include kidney failure, diseases of the eye, and vascular complications that may result in

amputations.²⁹

According to the Textbook of Black Related Diseases, diabetes mellitus is "a complex disorder of metabolism characterized by absolute or relative insulin deficiency."³⁰ There are two major types of diabetes mellitus, insulin-dependent diabetes which accounts for 5 to 10 percent of all cases, and non-insulin-dependent diabetes, accounting for 90 to 95 percent of all cases.³¹ The cause for both types is the absence of insulin.

To state it simply, in the absence of insulin, the blood sugar rises, a consequence of underutilization and overproduction of glucose (sugar). When the blood sugar rises high enough to exceed the renal threshold, osmotic diuresis occurs and there is a loss of sugar, water, and electrolytes. Thirst and hunger follow. If insulin is not given, there is the continuance of excessive urination, thirst, and eating, leading to weight loss, coma, and death.³² There is no known cure, but insulin taken orally or intravenously and proper diet can control and regulate the various symptoms of the condition.

Commonly known as sugar-diabetes, this major health problem is among the leading causes of early death among African-Americans. The prevalence of diabetes is 33 percent higher in the black population than in the white population and furthermore complications of diabetes are more frequent among the black population when compared to their white

counterparts.³³

At a conference in 1988 sponsored by the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, scientists studied why obesity and heredity accounted for the higher rate of diabetes in blacks in comparison to whites. They concluded that the reason for this fact was the higher level of blacks who were comparatively obese, which is defined as being 20 percent above your ideal weight matched for age, height and sex.³⁴

Thus, obesity is the major culprit of this disease, which in turn is related to the diet of African-Americans. To be frank, African-Americans in a sense are digging their graves with their mouths.

AIDS

AIDS is undoubtedly one of the most crucial health problems affecting the black community today. This disease has created an international challenge of enormous proportions for the society in general and the medical profession in particular. According to A Common Destiny, "persons at greatest risks are homosexual males, intravenous drug users, recipients of blood transfusions, those who have had heterosexual contact with infected individuals, and children born to women who are infected."³⁵

In addition to these facts, AIDS is a special problem for African-Americans because while blacks constitute about 12 percent of the U.S. population, they make up 27 percent

of all Americans with AIDS. Also interesting is the fact that blacks and Hispanics account for 70 percent of all cases in heterosexual men. As in the case of Earvin "Magic" Johnson, the greatest source of new infections is infected persons who presently show no symptoms and do not know they are infected.³⁶ Since January 1988, minorities have comprised 46 percent of reported AIDS cases.³⁷

AIDS is "a disease, caused by a virus that breaks down the body's immune system, leaving a person defenseless against a variety of life-threatening illnesses."³⁸ Each of the letters in AIDS stand for a word:

Acquired - this disease is passed on from one person to another, but it is not genetic or hereditary.

Immune - the body's defense system, which normally protects us from disease.

Deficiency - the defense system is not working.

Syndrome - a group of symptoms that, when they occur together, means a person is in an abnormal condition.

According to Message Magazine,

AIDS is transmitted in blood, semen, and vaginal secretions that are contaminated by HIV (the virus that attacks the body's white cells). The HIV must leave an infected person in blood, semen, or vaginal secretions and enter the bloodstream of a healthy person . . . there is no current evidence that AIDS can be transmitted through teardrops, saliva, sweat, sneezing, coughing, hugging, kissing,³⁹ toilet seats, mosquitoes or handshaking

Other factors making AIDS a serious health problem is that it is deadly because of no known cure and the average lifespan of an individual with full-blown AIDS is two years.

Once again, the majority of the persons who become infected with AIDS contract it due to lifestyle risk factors. As of 1989, the highest risk for contracting AIDS are:

1. Homosexuality - 73 percent
2. Past and present intravenous drug users - 17 percent
3. Recipients of blood - 1.5 percent
4. Hemophiliacs - 0.7 percent
5. Heterosexual partners of persons infected - 1 percent.⁴⁰

Although far from being comprehensive, this chapter nevertheless underscores the primary thesis that the major health problems of the African-American urban community are largely related to harmful lifestyle and diet patterns. There is a strong and vivid reality that one's health practices can influence one's quality of life. The effects of cancer, hypertension, diabetes, AIDS, and substance abuse can all be reduced by significant lifestyle alterations.

The following chapter examines a religion that incorporates health principles into everyday life and practice.

Chapter 4

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CHAPTER 5

A Successful Church Model of Integration of

Religion and Health

Seventh-day Adventists - Who Are They?

Seventh-day Adventists are a Bible believing, conservative, Christian Protestant denomination who subscribe to the wholistic notion of humankind. They are a world-wide movement, boasting a membership of over 6 million and are regarded as one of the healthiest groups in America because of their lifestyle. Over the past twenty-five years, many studies have been done to discover why Adventists distinguish themselves from the bulk of society in the area of health. The answer is simple - by following the health principles that have been part of the church's teachings for more than a century.

This chapter is included not to persuade individuals to become members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, but to show that there indeed is a successful model that harmonizes the principles of preaching and health education.

The fact also must be noted that since this project is written primarily for those in the urban context in the United States, of the one-million Seventh-day Adventists in the United States, 20 percent or slightly over 200,000 are African-American. Of those numbers, many have incorporated these massive but beneficial lifestyle changes to the betterment of their health.¹

Background

Seventh-day Adventists believe that not only the church but the individual is a temple for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit: "Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?"² Christians, they believe, ought to practice good health habits to protect the sanctuary of their body temples, the mind, the indwelling place of the Spirit of Christ. For this reason SDA's, throughout the past 100 years, have stressed the importance of health.³

The book, Questions on Doctrines, states:

Our health teaching is not a matter of religious taboos; in fact, it is much more than careful selection in diet. It is to us (Adventists) the following of a well balanced health program. We feel it to be our Christian duty to preserve our bodies in the best of health for the service and glory of God.⁴

Thus, Adventists believe that God's call to holiness involves a call to physical as well as spiritual health. Susannah Wesley, mother of the founder of Methodism, aptly summarized this principle:

Whatever weakens your reason, impairs the tenderness of your conscience, obscures your sense of God, decreases the strength and authority of your mind over your body - that thing is wrong, however innocent it may be in itself.⁵

This statement adequately sums up the Adventists' position on this issue.

Because of the Adventist belief of the impact that a person's lifestyle makes upon his/her spiritual experience

and his/her witness, they have set certain lifestyle requirements for becoming members. These standards include the abstinence from tobacco, alcoholic beverages, mind altering chemicals, and unclean flesh foods, as well as a constant yielding to the Spirit of God and His Word.⁶ Over the years, medical personnel and scientific researchers have done extensive studies to determine the value of such a lifestyle. This writer finds the following evidence very impressive:

- Male SDA's have an 8.9 year longer average life expectancy than does the general population, while female members have a 7.5 year longer average life expectancy. These statistics include all SDA's, even those who follow the health principles only loosely.

- Vegetarian Adventists have a reduced risk of osteoporosis when compared to meat eaters in the general population.

- Seventh-day Adventists have a lower incidence of breast, prostate, pancreatic, and ovarian cancers than does the general population. Vegetarian SDA's are one-half as likely as people in the general population to get colon or rectal cancer.

- Nonvegetarian male Adventists have 56 percent of the expected coronary heart disease mortality. The heart disease rate for lacto-ovo vegetarian men is 39 percent, while vegetarian males have an expected coronary heart

disease mortality rate that is only 12 percent of that of the general population.⁷

These are just a few of the benefits that have been documented that prove the benefit of a healthy lifestyle.

Basic Principles for Health

Ellen G. White, a Seventh-day Adventist pioneer who lived and wrote in the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth century, expounded much on the subject of healthful living. Many of the concepts and ideas that she wrote about seem remarkable even today because much of what she wrote predated much of the nutritional knowledge that has been uncovered by scientists only in the last few decades. Below is perhaps her most celebrated statement regarding the fundamental principles to a life of health: "Pure air, sunlight, abstemiousness, rest, exercise, proper diet, the use of water, trust in divine power,... these are the true remedies [for health]."⁸ The following is a brief examination of the benefits of each of these health principles.

Pure Air

Dale Martin writes:

It is no secret that clean, fresh air is able to purify by rendering bacteria, viruses, and other harmful substances inactive, whether in the laboratory as on the clothesline. Besides assisting our immune system in its proper function, fresh air can also help prevent disease by helping to eliminate damaging toxins from the body."⁹

Undoubtedly, pure air is the most essential item of all for the sustaining of life. The air that we breathe contains oxygen, without which life could not exist on this planet.

By breathing, we not only sustain our lives but

we also help lift blood from the lower body to the heart, provide massage for the liver and the stomach to aid in digestion, draw in large amounts of oxygen (a gallon or more with each deep breath) to utilize our tissues, and receive the necessary oxygen to change our food into energy.¹⁰

Seventh-day Adventists and medical professionals agree that an environment of impure air, in or outside of the home, causes the blood to carry less oxygen than is required for the optimal function of every cell. It is therefore important to do everything possible to secure a generous supply of fresh air daily.¹¹

There is also a spiritual dimension to the receiving of pure air. Usually living in major urban centers, the air quality is less than desirable, because of either industrial smog or automobile exhaust. Research has stated many potentially harmful effects of daily breathing this low-quality air. But the greater concern is the much more serious pollutants of tobacco, marijuana and cocaine smoke that people introduce voluntarily into their bodies. These deadly poisons, especially the much abused tobacco, introduce poisons into the body and causes carbon monoxide which destroys the capacity of the red blood cells to carry the maximum load of oxygen.¹² Smokers also have a high risk

of contracting lung cancer, emphysema, heart disease, and multiple other needless serious complications.¹³

This first principle declares that pure air is vital. Its quality is important for sustaining our bodies in the best of health.

Sunshine

Although the negative effects of the sun's rays have been recently publicized and discussed, SDA's believe sunshine is another benefit to one's total health. Recent research has amazingly discovered many beneficial uses of sunshine. Among them are:

1. Prevention of cancer;
2. Improving energy and fitness;
3. Lowering blood pressure;
4. Decreasing resting heart rate;
5. Lowering cholesterol;
6. Increasing the storage of glycerin (sugar);

in the liver, which in turn lowers sugar levels in the blood.

7. Strengthens the immune system;
8. Increases the body's tolerance of stress;
9. Enhances the beauty of the skin;
10. Directly aids in killing germs; and
11. Aids in weight reduction¹⁴

The Bible declares that "light is essential to life" (Gen. 1:3). Thus, Adventists believe and medical science

supports that sunlight helps provide food for all mankind because light shining on the leaves of plants helps manufacture food through a process of photosynthesis. Also, a proper amount of sunlight on human skin produces a reaction which helps the body to create vitamin D, which aids in the proper formation of bones and teeth. Finally, the sun is beneficial through its carrying ultraviolet rays that kills bacteria -- is one of the causes of many diseases and illnesses.¹⁵ Therefore, sunshine is another major key in health and healing.

Abstemiousness

In essence, this next fundamental principle discusses the blessings or benefits of temperate, drug-free, stimulant-free living. SDA's believe the most important lesson for any person to learn in life is the lesson of placing his/her intelligence in control of the actions of this life, and making decisions based upon what is right and best for him/her, rather than on the desires of the moment. Today the huge problem of drug abuse in all of its forms is an indication that we need to learn this lesson of self-control.

SDA's believe in the Pauline concept of being "temperate in all things" and abstaining from anything that would do harm to one's body. Therefore, the drugs of tobacco, alcohol, illicit substances, and caffeine are all forbidden. Although there have been some recent evidence

that moderate drinking can reduce cholesterol levels, the majority of research proves the negative impact on your health of drinking and other drug forms.¹⁶

Adventists also believe that God communicates with us only through our minds, therefore the mind should be free and clear from any mind-altering or harmful drugs that will impede making correct decisions.¹⁷ Through self-control and abstemiousness, one can benefit much in terms of overall health.

Rest

Another SDA lifestyle principle includes the issues of rest. Along with the findings of medical science, they believe that proper rest is essential for health of body and mind. A fatigued mind has the tendency to follow the lines of least resistance.¹⁸ Thus, setting aside time for proper rest is essential to maintaining a healthy existence.

Some 110 tons of caffeine are consumed each day in coffee and cola drinks by individuals who are abusing their tired bodies and minds to perform without adequate rest.¹⁹ Science tells us that when patients are deprived of sleep for long periods of time, malfunctions results which often manifest themselves in hallucinations and an unreliable mind. Consequently only "a limited amount of sleep loss can be sustained before emotional and intellectual functions deteriorate."²⁰

We are also told that sleep which is induced by

sleeping pills or drugs is not as restorative as natural sleep.²¹ So the ideal program for the human body is to work and play vigorously both physically and mentally during the day, then allow sufficient time for the body to be restored through natural sleep during the night.

Exercise

Much is presently being said about the wisdom of regular exercise. Adventists have long understood its benefits.

Regular exercise is the simple formula for increased energy, a firm body, stress relief, healthier skin, more self-confidence, effective weight control, improved digestion and regularity, and reduced depression and the risk of heart disease and cancer. Exercise is not merely an option, it is essential to maintaining optimum health - both physical and mental.²²

SDA's have based this finding of exercise from principles of Scripture: Useful activity tends to prosperity; inactivity and laziness tend to adversity (Prov. 6:6-13; 14:23). God prescribed activity for the first man and woman - care for their garden home in the open air (Gen. 2:5,15; 3:19). Christ Himself set an example of physical activity. For most of His life He engaged in manual labor as a carpenter, and during His ministry He walked the roads of Palestine.²³

Adventists overwhelmingly agree with the statement,

"Exercise is a necessary ingredient for the overall health of the body."²⁴

Proper Diet

Lewis Walton writes:

the Adventist concept of diet goes far beyond the topic of what to eat, and when - and even where. It advises on the most helpful ways to cook. It describes combinations of food that are best avoided. It even describes an intricate link between the digestive system and the brain, reaching the conclusion that people's mental acuity, efficiency, and even happiness hinge to a remarkable degree on how they follow the rules of diet.²⁵

Thus, it can be said without hesitation that the majority of health problems tend to center on the degenerative type of diseases that are directly traceable to diet and lifestyle.

Adventists believe that the original diet God planned, consisting of grains, fruits, nuts, and vegetables, offers the right nutritional ingredients to support optimum health. Although, the Bible does not condemn the eating of clean meats, a balanced vegetarian diet is believed to be the best for health.²⁶

Furthermore, studies reveal that increased meat consumption can cause an increase of atherosclerosis, cancer, kidney disorders, osteoporosis, and trichinosis, and can decrease the life expectancy.²⁷

Overeating is also discouraged as well as the overuse of refined foods, especially foods that contain sugar. Statistics positively show that healthy eating has added

years to the lives of SDA's.²⁸

The Use of Water

Since a large percentage of the body weight is water, and one of the important functions of the kidney is to filter and maintain proper fluids within the body, Adventists teach that the liberal drinking of water will strengthen the health condition of the body.²⁹

Other benefits of drinking water include:

1. Lubrication of all internal body parts;
2. Aides in digestion and absorption of our foods;
3. Aides in elimination;
4. Quenches thirst;
5. Use of cleansing inward and outward;
6. Aids in the healing process.³⁰

We can clearly see that water is most wonderful in maintaining our good health.

Trust in Divine Power

The great evangelist Dwight L. Moody articulates appealingly the key to success:

Trust in yourself, and you are doomed in disappointment, trust in your friends, and they will die and leave you; trust in money and you may have it taken from you; trust in reputation and some slanderous tongue may last it; but trust in God, and you are never to be confounded in time or eternity.³¹

Adventists assert, and I agree, that we are much better suited to make the best choices for our health and also to have the power available to achieve the desired results if

we focus our trust in God.

Comments

The beauty of the Seventh-day Adventist health message is that it is systematically included in the repertoire of the teaching and preaching of its leaders to the people. African-American clergy in our inner cities would do well to study and perhaps, include some of the tips that Adventists give on issues of health. For a fact, keeping silent would do more harm than good.

Although Seventh-day Adventism is not the only religious body that integrates religion and health such as Christian Science, I believe it is one of the most well-documented denominations in this particular study.

The next chapter includes sermon models that emphasize wholistic, healthful living.

Chapter 5

NOTES

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- 5 See C. B. Haynes, "Church Standards," Review and Herald, 30 Oct. 1941, 7.
- 6 Seventh-day Adventist Ministerial Association, Seventh-day Adventists Believe (Takoma Park, Md: Review and Herald, 1988), 289.
- 7 Chris Rucker and Jan Hoffman, The Seventh-day Adventist Diet (New York: Random House, 1991), xv-xviii.
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Barbara, Calif.: Woodbridge Press, 1979), 12-58.

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30

Martin and Martin, 99-108.

31

See Martin and Martin, 170.

CHAPTER 6

Sermon Models that Promote Healthy Living

Included in this chapter are two sermon models that can be used as resource material for developing and delivering sermons that promote healthy and wholistic lifestyles. The first message, "A Paradise Lost," was delivered by James Kyle, a noted ordained minister and medical doctor of Southern California. This sermon was preached to a large affluent inner city congregation on a special medical professionals day. The message was deductive in its approach in promoting health education. The message was well-received and after speaking, he hosted an afternoon seminar on issues of urban health.

Included for the second sermon model is this writer's message to my Compton congregation on the subject "The Gospel and Prolonging Life." It was given to inspire hope and inspiration in the issues of life and health. This message was included in a series of sermons to promote health education and to raise issues that would provide spiritual impetus for such changes.

"A Paradise Lost"

by James Kyle

Text: Gen. 3:16-19

"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.' God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning - the sixth day." (Gen. 1:27-28, 31, New International Version)

Picture in your mind a world filled with beauty, happiness, health and joy. A world with no tears, pain, sickness, or death. In short, a place call paradise. This was the original plan in the mind of God for his people. This place provided for maximal well-being of mind, body, and soul. But, due to man's faithlessness his paradise was lost. The party was over. The harmonious strains of joy were twisted into a cacophonous, primal, scream of pain and misery that has echoed through the centuries and shook the gates of heaven.

. . . To the woman he said, "I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you." To Adam he said, . . . "Because you

listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return." (Genesis 3:16-19, NIV)

THE CURSE OF EVE:

1. Greatly multiplied sorrow and pain in conception and childbirth.
2. Subjugation to her husband.

THE CURSE OF ADAM:

1. The ground itself was cursed.
2. Survival would now be linked to life-long toil and misery.
3. To dust you shall return.

THE COMMON PROBLEMS FACED BY MANKIND WORLDWIDE ARE EITHER THE DIRECT RESULT OF THESE CURSES OR ARE CAUSED BY MAN'S FEEBLE ATTEMPTS TO IGNORE THEM.

I will briefly discuss these curses, but concentrate mainly on the final curse.

The first curse of Eve foretold the pain and sorrow associated with childbirth. It is clear that most men and women have grave misunderstandings about the opposite sex.

I was shocked to discover that the young men in my son's tenth grade biology class were outraged when their teacher suggested that men were too weak to bear children. In truth, the pain associated with childbirth would kill the average man, demonstrating the higher pain tolerance of women to men. Just as women bear the burden of painful childbirth, they also are the most grieved when the fruit of their womb is harmed or killed. This painful and tearful maternal link, which stretches from cradle to grave, is but the first curse of sin. This curse separates us from other species on earth. It is this curse that has made anesthesiologists wealthy. It is this curse that has impacted medical technology from amniocentesis to abortion. There are no issues more divisive in American society than those surrounding childbirth such as artificial insemination, surrogate parenthood, birth control, genetic engineering, and abortion.

ISSUES THAT WOULD BE MOOT BEFORE THE ENTRANCE OF SIN AND DEATH, NOW THREATEN THE HARMONY OF WESTERN NATIONS AND THE VERY SURVIVAL OF DEVELOPING NATIONS.

The second curse, women's subjugation to men, is another issue of study. In Eden, there was an equality of the sexes so unparalleled that no earthly formula or institution has been able to duplicate it since. The triangular relationship between a man, a woman, and their God, was so irrevocably altered by sin, that a new and

onerous relationship was begun that placed women in subjection to the husbands. Sin had destroyed men and women's ability to reach consensus in relationship to marriage. This was Eve's curse, but it is passed down to her daughters. It cannot be overlooked that this curse did not place women in subjection to men, but wives in subjection to their husbands.

The third curse was directed toward Adam, but has effected us all: "cursed is the ground for your sake". The ground has brought forth thorns and thistles. It is a planet groaning from the curse of sin. It is ravaged by drought and floods, earthquakes and hurricanes, pollution and a threadbare ozone layer. The oceans are poisoned, the air is dirty. If man continues to abuse the earth it will surely cease to be habitable in but a few decades.

The fourth curse is the life-long association of survival with toiling, sweat, and pain. No work, no eat. No longer did the earth give forth her protection and sustenance to man. Now he was forced to wrest from nature's grasp the items necessary for survival.

As we look at the consequences of paradise lost it must be remembered that the above "curses" were not some set of arbitrary punishments, but formed the basis for a new set of ground rules for the salvation of the human race. God in his wisdom understood just what we were up against in our state of rebellion and provided a disciplinary structure for

our rehabilitation. Thus, the travail of childbirth was a subjugation of wives to their husbands, . . . designed to create a sense of interdependence in the nuclear family that would bond through the resolution of conflict two hearts in a saving, ennobling relationship. The curse upon the ground was designed to defeat man's sense of self-reliance and bond him to a real stewardship of his natural resources, which were now as endangered as himself. The life-long relationship of toil to survival would give back to man a sense of purpose, accomplishment, and dignity for a job well done, while at the same time teach him daily of his dependence on his Heavenly Father for the ability to provide for his own needs.

Now how do the above concepts play out in Black America? Satan has attacked our community in all four of the above areas:

1. Despite the travail of childbirth we have lost respect for the sanctity of life. As captives, we have emulated the examples of our captors, and have disrespected African womanhood We allow our children to impregnate each other like animals in heat. Teenage pregnancy is out of control. Young men who are not old enough to shave, drive, or work are old enough to have an erection and pull a trigger. So they give life as senselessly as they take life and our streets run with blood as our daughters suckle hopeless generations of bastard

offspring. Now our young lions roam the streets in homicidal bands ready to kill and be killed. They call themselves Crips, Bloods, Cousins, but we know them as living monuments to the emasculation and obsolescence of the adult African male role model, whose failure has created these young Frankensteins of the streets. Proverbs 23:13 tells us not to withhold correction from a child, but absentee fathers and two-timing husbands will never turn the tide of destruction of our young men.

2. The subjugation of our wives to their husbands has been distorted to a general lack of respect for the role of women in general. The natural order of the family has been twisted by satanic and racist influences. Our men see their wives not as lovers and friends, but call them "Mama", as if one mother wasn't enough. In this maternal role our women are expected to nurture, feed, cloth, house and suckle useless men like a mother cares for her child; therefore she reciprocates and calls this helpless leach, "Baby." If men don't respect themselves as babies, they will not respect you as surrogate mothers. Why would a women willingly subject herself to a child? This theme is so powerful that last week the largest TV audience since Watergate sat spellbound in their living rooms watching two highly educated African Americans destroy one another and all of us by implication over charges of sexual harassment. When the biblical imperatives are ignored, the basic integrity of our

interpersonal relationships is destined to fail.

3. Although the ground has been cursed, Black Americans view the ecological disaster in the world as the white man's problem. I live in San Diego where we have been experiencing the worst drought in decades. I'll tell you before the white man's water runs out, mine will run out first. If his air is polluted, will my air be any cleaner? The largest number of starving children tonight will go to bed hungry in Africa, not Russia. My people are more effected by the curse on the ground than any one else; I, of all people should be a steward of natural resources and an advocate for agricultural development in the homeland.

4. Satan has used the discipline "to toil and sweat" to earn our survival and literally destroyed our community. Through slavery he robbed us of our economic structure and institutions. He has distorted our work ethic so that now we're too good to work in McDonald's. Through a dehumanizing welfare system he created a community so used to living on handouts that we lost the will to work. Women and children could sip from the throws of "AFDC" if their miseducated, undertrained, and obsolescent husbands and fathers left the home. As Black male unemployment rose and as schools failed in their mandate to educate our children, entrepreneurial young brothers soon learned that joining a gang and pushing dope on a local and national level paid more than IBM or Chrysler Corp. ever paid. The lessons of

industry, creatively, and entrepreneurship taught in proverbs were lost. We have become consumers, not producers. We would much rather be employees than employers.

Not only was paradise lost in Eden, but the ground rules for our survival which were laid down in Eden have also been lost today. But, before I close, I must turn my attention to the final curse of a lost paradise. "For dust thou art and to dust you shall return."

By this curse the pain and sorrow of the first four would not be allowed to last forever. One day we would return to the dust we were formed from. It was a reminder that the ultimate wage of sin is death. But there are things worse than dying. Pain, suffering, loneliness, premature demise, and the hopelessness of a Christless life are far worse than death alone could ever be. There are many in the audience who have dedicated their lives to the qualitative improvement of life, to the relief of suffering, to the promotion of health and wellness, because we realize that life has such a tremendous value.

"Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price, therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's. (1 Cor. 6:19-20)

It is time for us to stop reading this passage and assume that by our abstinence from drugs or pork we have

glorified God in our bodies. Glorified bodies are fit bodies. They are free of immorality. They are committed to the promotion of the kingdom of God on earth. They are selfless bodies, willing to sacrifice all for the cause of God. They are possessed bodies, owned and purchased by Christ; but finally they are dust, bound for glory.

The health issues effecting our community are numerous and frightening:

- Homicide is still the number one cause of death among our young men.

- Being unfit is fashionable and well tolerated in our community.

- We are one of the most overfed but undernourished groups in America.

- Black males experience a higher incidence of cancer and a higher mortality rate than their white counterparts.

- Overall African Americans can expect to live five years less than their white counterparts.

- The spread of AIDS is faster in African Americans than in other ethnic groups and 52 percent of all women with aids in America are Black.

Surely glorified bodies are needed to spread hope in the valley of despair, knowledge in the wilderness of ignorance, healing in the sea of suffering. God calls you to restore paradise lost in the lives of His people everywhere.

"Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever" (Rev. 22:1-5, NIV).

"The Gospel and Prolonging Life"

by Emil D. Peeler

Luke 7:11-15

Throughout the long years of our earthly pilgrimage, God has been seeking to impress upon us that it is His desire that we might have life and have it more abundantly. From that strange mysterious moment in some distant undatable day when He breathed the breath of life into the nostrils of a sculpted lump of clay and then stamped His divine image upon mankind and called him a living soul, God has blessed humanity with the gift of life and the necessary support systems to develop and sustain it.

Out of all the wonderful blessings that heaven has in store for us, life is one of God's most precious gifts. We may not have everything we want: our families may be falling apart; we may be just two paychecks from sitting side by side with the homeless; our financial forecast for the future may be cloudy; our health may be failing; we may have pain in our hearts, tears in our eyes, and burdens to bear. But irrespective of these painful realities, all of us will have to admit that it is a blessing to be alive. When God rides by each morning chauffeured by the invisible winds and touches us with his fingers of mercy, and our eyes open to greet the virgin light of a new day, then we know life is a blessing.

Life has its complex problems, but it has its infinite possibilities. Life has its stubborn obstacles. But it has its awesome opportunities. Life has its grave injustices. But it has its unfailing mercies. Life has its jokes. But it also has its joys. God has designed life in such a way that it has no rival. Life can't be measured by the length of years, by the balance in our bank accounts, or by our socio-economic status. For though it is lived for only a moment, life is the greatest gift that God has to give.

Yet, as precious as life is, a generation has arisen among us that has seemed to declare war on life. Our streets have become combat zones. Our homes have become prison cells! Our churches have now made the top ten on the

robbers list of who's who to rip off. Alcohol, drugs, inadequate diets, and cigarette smoking are keeping our bodies sick and our hospitals full. Each of us have become a potential target for violent elimination. Life, as God had intended, was to be revered and respected. But today, life is cheap. In these days a life can be taken for a thrill of it. In these days a life can be taken for a diamond ring, a gold chain, a pair of sneakers, a leather jacket, or for thirty pieces of silver.

How sad it is today that everything we love has the signature of death written all over it. Even our values are the values of death. But, Jesus demonstrated to his disciples, then and now, that he expects us to develop a ministry that prolongs life.

In Luke 7:11-15, we find the Lord entering the city of Nain and at the gate of the city He is met by a funeral procession. A young man, the only son of his mother (who is a widow) is being carried to his final resting place. How often do we see this same situation repeated in our communities day after day. The father is dead and gone, and the young man is not far behind. The poor wife is left to grieve alone and to make it in a cold, cruel world the best way she can. Meanwhile, the church is sitting quietly by, looking on helplessly and allowing death to have its way.

Well, the eulogy has been eloquently delivered, the choir has sung sweetly, the church clerk had read all the

cards and condolences, and now comes the long march to the graveside for the service of committal. The grave is open and waiting, the grave attendant is anxiously awaiting for the arrival of the company of mourners. The numb and grief stricken mother is drowning in her own tears. They are within a few yards of burying distance when the hopeful words of our text report that the Lord saw her. I'm so glad that Jesus sees us. Some of us never see anything. Some of us never see anybody who needs our help. Needy people and needy situations can be all around us, staring us in the face, but yet we don't see them. But, the Lord saw her! She didn't merely make an impression on the optic nerve of his omniscient eye. I mean the Lord saw her! He saw her weeping eyes! He saw her broken heart! He saw her dismay about tomorrow. The Lord saw her and if you don't get anything out of this message, I hope you leave here with the blessed assurance bubbling over in your bosom that the Lord sees you. He sees your hurt, hopes, anxieties, and fears. He has those types of eyes that allow him to look beyond your faults and see your need. The Lord saw her!

Then Luke repeats that after the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her. We could do so much as people if we just had a little compassion. At the gate of this city, Life and Death had an eyeball to eyeball confrontation. And Life won out because the Lord of life saw and had compassion on a grieving soul. So he came and touched the casket and those

that were carrying him stood still. He said, "Young man, I say unto thee, arise." The Word says, "And he that was dead stood up and began to speak and he delivered him to his mother" (Luke 7:13,14). Now notice if you will the sequence of the actions of our Lord. (1) He saw; (2) He had compassion; (3) He came; (4) He touched; (5) He said; and (6) He delivered. Compassion motivated the Lord to put his feet in motion. He saw and had compassion and so he came. He didn't stand still, he didn't stand back as a spectator. He saw and had compassion, and so he came. And the church is standing still when in reality we ought to be moving. But you won't be on the move unless you see something to move for! We aren't doing anything because we aren't seeing anything! In the action of our Lord, he is teaching us that we need to develop a ministry that prolongs life.

When we observe this text, you will notice three elements that constitute such a ministry.

1. You must confront the condition. The Word says that He "touched the bier and the bier that bare him stood still." Now this bier was a wicker style couch on which the dead were laid, and it was against all social customs to touch this bier; but Jesus touched it. In other words, He confronted the fact and condition of death. If He hadn't been present at this gate with His disciples, then like us they would have simply stepped aside and allowed this funeral procession to pass on its way. But Jesus refused to

surrender this young life to death and the grave. He stepped in the way and touched the bier, and the funeral procession came to a screeching halt.

Like Jesus, we have to confront all of these situations that are carrying our young people to an early grave. We can't let death declare open season on us and call ourselves the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. We've got to focus our faith and our talents on dealing with some of these dreadful situations. Jesus dared to confront death. He stepped up to death. He stepped in the way of death. He put out his omnipotent hand and stopped death. He touched the bier and the pall-bearers stood still. And if the church would touch the life of the dope addict, then the dope pusher would keep still. If the church would confront advertisers to stop advertising the death products of alcohol and cigarettes in our neighborhoods, then our hospitals would stay empty. If the church would touch the life of the wayward fathers and wayward mothers, then wayward sons and daughters would be still. If the church would intervene and prolong life, then the undertaker would be still. This was a bold and untraditional move on the part of Jesus. In the face of death everyone felt hopeless, helpless, and powerless, but Jesus confronted the condition and stopped the funeral procession in its tracks. If He did it then I believe that he can do it now. So, if Jesus has the power to bring a halt to death, then He can bring a halt to drug addiction.

He can bring a halt to alcoholism. He can bring a halt to wasted days. And whatever the problem is, He can bring a halt to it and give us a new lease on life. I don't care what the doctor says! I don't care what society's prognosis is -- Jesus can give you an extension on life.

Jesus can prolong your life! If you are not convinced that Jesus can prolong life, then let's ask Hezekiah. Hezekiah said, "I was in my house one day, and I heard the bell ring and when I answered the door, death had backed his wrecker up to my house." Death said, "Hezekiah I got orders to throw you in!" Hezekiah said, "I got to my praying ground and I told the Lord I wasn't ready yet. The Word came back informing me that I had 15 extra years" (2 Kings 20:1-11, paraphrased).

Secondly, this text teaches us that we've got to give people an alternative lifestyle. Jesus said, "I say unto thee, arise."

Not only are we to confront the problem but we must give people a life extending alternative. Our people are caught up in a death dealing lifestyle because the church has not been busy enough in providing them with an alternative way of living. We've got to build creative ministries on the Word of God that teach people how to live, how to eat, how to dress, and how to prolong their lives. People need to know that there is no life apart from God. People need the Word.

Jesus walked up to this bier and saw this young man wrapped up in everlasting sleep, He saw his arms folded, never to swing freely again. I don't know how this boy died. I don't know if he got gunned down on the school ground because somebody wanted his tennis shoes. I don't know if he overdosed in some dark, damp, stinking alley. I don't know if he died from AIDS. I don't know if he got sick of hypocritical Christians and so he checked himself out of this world. I don't know how he died; but in this world you can die from anything. I don't know how he died, but I do know that Jesus stepped up. He took out his divine key chain and jingled the keys of death, hell, and the grave in the boys ear and said, "Young man, this if the Resurrection and the Life talking to you. I came that you might have life, I know death has a grip on you but I can set you free. Young man, I say unto thee, I am existence personified. I have no beginning and no end, I say unto thee. I, who am the ground of all being. I, who am the maker of all that is. I, who am the ultimate destiny of all that will ever be. I, who am all in all; I'm swiftness in the foot, I'm dexterity in the hand, I'm strength in the forearms, I'm twitching in the eyelids, I'm air in the lungs, I'm every beat of your heart, and I say unto thee. I am the mind's capacity to comprehend, I'm the strong will's ability to implement. I'm your soul's satisfied feeling--I say unto thee. I'm life in the middle, and when you get

down to the end, don't worry about your dying bed, because I'll be life at the end--I say unto thee arise!

I wish you would turn on the lights in the audio visual departments of your minds and let this story flash on its screen. I see the young man when he heard the Word. I see the onlooking crowd as they looked on with disbelief. I see the young man when he sat up and began to look around, and the Word says that "he began to speak" (Luke 7:15, KJV). He acted like a young man who had staggered his way through death and so he asked three questions: Where am I?; How did I get here?; and Where are you taking me? These are the fundamental questions of human existence. The Word of God has the answer and that's why we must preach the word. The Word will give life and hope.

Lastly, this text teaches us that we've got to restore normal relationships. The Bible says that Jesus delivered him unto his mother. Jesus is a great deliverer. After this great miracle, Jesus delivered him unto his mother. This is where he belonged at this age and stage of life. He needed his mother. Jesus delivers, Jesus reconciles, and Jesus restores normal relationships. The breakup of family life is abnormal and we've got to develop a ministry that brings healing and help to fragmented homes. It's abnormal for our black boys to fill up jail houses. It's abnormal for teenagers to have baby after baby. But whatever the situation, Jesus can put homes back together.

Well, when Jesus delivered this boy, death got mad, stamped on the ground, kicked up some dust, and pointed his long finger in his face and said, "I'll get you for this one day Jesus." Jesus said, "I'll tell you what. One day you meet me at Calvary and we'll settle this once and for all."

Summary and Conclusions

The need for expounding on the good news of health education by our African-American clergymen is crucial. As heretofore stated, my basis for recommending that issues of health be included into the black preacher's sermon content are four-fold.

(1) We have a direct biblical mandate to live healthy and wholistically.

(2) We have, as African-American preachers, a rich and solid history of leading our people through every major crisis event.

(3) The health of our black constituents and community is declining, and most of our sicknesses are caused by lifestyle choices.

(4) We have the data and the manpower to make a difference.

African-American clergy must once again lead out in this battle to educate, uplift, and mobilize the people in ways that would cause them to choose wisely in areas of health management. They must teach that there is a direct

relationship between the body, mind and soul and that God is expecting us to treat our vessels with utmost care. The Bible says, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge" (Hos. 4:6), thus, we as God's mouthpieces must also spread this message that will make a direct impact on the quality of life that people here and now can attest to.

Finally, I do not believe that the problems of health of African-Americans would altogether cease if the black clergy were indeed inspired to include health educational concepts and information in their sermons. But I do strongly believe that the pulpit is an invaluable tool to begin the process of greater awareness of issues of health and wholistic lifestyles that are rooted in the biblical principles that we oftentimes overlook. Therefore, if our clergy take seriously this challenge, I do believe that we can begin to enjoy the abundant life that Jesus calls for all of His children to partake of.

APPENDIX:

Bibliographic Overview

This Appendix is included to provide an overview of this project's major bibliographic material and to explain how each source was integrated into the primary thesis. Although many sources were used, these are a few of this writer's most valuable resources that were helpful in formulating each chapter.

In Chapter 2, which discusses the role and the content of the black preacher, two books were significant in providing a footing and basis for my conclusions. The first of these is Charles V. Hamilton's work on The Black Preacher in America. Very useful were his insightful discussions of the historical black preacher, in which he accurately chronicles the failures as well as the successes of this black professional. Hamilton also was the first author of note to refute the idea that the black church, thus the black preacher, were only otherworldly in their pre-Civil War religion. Because life during the slave period seemed hopeless and the primary concern was indeed otherworldly, Hamilton aptly reviews the different roles that black preachers played even during that period. Without attempting to create an image of a typical black preacher, Hamilton inspired me to stay with the documented facts without generalizing.

The other primary source was H. Beecher Hicks' book The

Images of the Black Preacher. Hicks gives a thorough, concise, positive yet balanced examination of the historical role and image of the African-American clergyperson. While he readily admits that some few black preachers have made a mockery of the ministerial office, he is convinced that the black preacher has been used as the primary catalyst for positive change in the black community throughout history. Useful also was his chapter on the leadership profile of the black preacher, which concludes with a challenge by Hicks that the black preacher must again "become the community chieftain with a world leadership sometimes wider than his vision and exceeding his grasp. . . . he must be the mobilizing force that is able to lift people to higher levels of dignity and respect." It was this quote that confirmed my belief that black preachers can and must use their power to make an impact in the health issues of their people. I will be forever grateful to Hicks for sharing with me his dreams to see a more competent, compassionate and responsive black clergy.

J. S. Levin's article in the Journal of the National Medical Association entitled, "The Role of the Black Church in Community Medicine," was the closest literature this writer found that closely resembled my thesis. Although Levin's article primarily focuses on challenging the black church at large, I suggest that the black church and the black preacher are inextricably bound to each other. For

without the black preacher, the black church cannot go forward, and without the black church the black preacher would have no forum or vehicle from which to initiate his ideas and programs. Levins states, and I essentially agree, that "historically, the black church has been the preserver and perpetuator of black ethics . . . [and] the traditional ethic of community-oriented service in the black ethics is highly compatible with the communitarian ethic of community medicine. Given this congruence and multidocumented fact that Black-Americans are at risk and an underserved group regarding health status indicators, the provisions of preventive health care, respectively, the black church is an extremely relevant locus for the practice of community medicine." This statement and others were influential in formulating my thoughts on the issues that combined church, health, and the community as a practical venue to dispense seeds for health principles.

Another useful source for this project was the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Report of the Secretary's Task Force on Black and Minority Health. This resource was invaluable in that it: (1) reviewed departmental programs to determine how health problems of minorities have been addressed; (2) gives a careful analysis of the range of health care resources and information available; and (3) gives a summary of the health status of African-Americans and other minorities.

To this writer, this volume is indeed significant, because of its desire to answer the question of why the continuing disparity exists in the burden of death and illness experienced by African-Americans and other minorities as compared to our nation's population as a whole. Although the question is never completely answered in this volume, the statistics, graphs, charts, and tables, were all helpful in determining certain health patterns that were used in Chapter 3. Also this report's comments and statistics on the health issues of cancer, chemical dependency, diabetes and cardiovascular diseases were also beneficial in my research.

George Berkleys' book On Being Black and Healthy is an informative and provocative guide on how African-Americans can lead longer and healthier lives. Although written from the perspective of a white physician, this volume is both practical and helpful in its dissemination of information. Most interesting was his research data that indicates why African-Americans seem especially vulnerable to certain illnesses and how preventive measures can give protection from these ailments. Although I definitely did not agree with all of his conclusions and suggestions, I did appreciate his common-sense approach to diet and his comprehensive statistics on cancer, diabetes, and hypertension.

Prominent among my sources on healthful living is Dale

and Kathy Martin's book Living Well. This entire volume was used in this project because of the completeness of its wholistic principles. In plain laymen's terms, the Martins seek to educate before they try to mandate. Especially helpful was the expansion of the Seventh-day Adventist eight health principles and their place of priority in attaining and maintaining a healthy lifestyle. The chapter entitled "Inside Nutritional Myths," also was beneficial in giving credible and documented evidence on the relationship between types of foods consumed and related diseases.

To provide this writer with a biblical exposition of the fundamental doctrines of Seventh-day Adventists, the book Seventh-day Adventists Believe proved invaluable. Written by the denomination's Ministerial Association, this volume was extremely beneficial in explaining the areas pertaining to Christian life and behavior. From the abstinence of smoking to the outlining and promotion of the SDA's eight fundamental health principles, Seventh-day Adventists Believe is most liberal in its use of biblical and medical evidence for support. This project was aided also by this book's simple yet profound explanation of the blessings of nutritious food and the rediscovery of God's original diet.

Another primary resource used was Health Care Issues in Black America, edited by Woodrow Jones, Jr. and Mitchell Rice. Although I did not use much of that material within

this project, this book served as a stimulus in my critical thinking in the area of African-American health issues.

If not the primary volume that affected my attitude on this subject, it was indeed the most stimulating and enlightening. This book includes essays from various authors on different subjects of African-American health. Of particular interest was Patrick R. Clifford's essay on "Substance Abuse in the Black Community," where he outlines sociocultural determinants as well as some applicable prevention strategies of substance abuse.

Last in this list of primary sources is Ellen G. White's Counsels on Health. Although written nearly a century ago, White gives an excellent and helpful overview of the relationship between mind, body, and soul. She also sets forth many statements about lifestyle and preventive health that only recently have been confirmed by medical science. It is from this volume that Seventh-day Adventists extract many of their health beliefs and guidelines. Very biblical in her documentation, White places strong emphasis on the effect the body has on the mind and vice versa. This book served as my basis in understanding the history, philosophy and theology of SDA's health beliefs.

Because of my extensive use of written material for this project, all volumes, essays, and articles could not be included in this Appendix. Only those sources that were influential in the formation of my thesis or parts thereof

were analyzed. Though far from being extensive or comprehensive, I believe this Appendix shares an overview of some of the writer's primary data for this venture.

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